

## **Minutes of City Council Work Session**

**9/2/15**

Councilors present: Jane Knodell, Selene Colburn, Adam Roof, Sara Giannoni, Tom Ayres, Kurt Wright, Sharon Bushor, Chip Mason, Karen Paul, Joan Shannon

Councilors absent: David Hartnett, Max Tracy

Others present: Eileen Blackwood (City Attorney), Mayor Miro Weinberger, Brian Lowe, Jennifer Kaulius, Alicia Freese, Charles Norris-Brown, Genese Grill, Paul Schnabel, Brian LeClair, Joe Speidel, Lainey Rappaport, April Werner, Deb Flanders, Matt McMahon, Allison Curran, Bradley Yandow, James Lockridge, Jean Waltz.

President Knodell called the meeting to order at 5:34 pm

Agenda—Wright moved to adopt with amendment of adding a public forum as item 1.5; Mason seconded. Unanimous.

Knodell made some initial remarks explaining the background of this meeting and the prior council's request to explore committees and how to handle them with two fewer councilors. It has been decided that each committee would not meet unless it had something to do. Each committee was to report items it wanted to work on, and tonight is for the rest of the council to give feedback on those ideas.

Public forum opened at 5:36.

Charles Norris-Brown spoke to Plan BTV South End and BCA involvement

Genese Grill spoke to citizen concerns and voice and governance of BCA

Lainie Rappaport came representing Cemetery Commission to ask that Cemetery Commission not be merged with Parks and asked Councilors to attend Commission's 9/17 meeting.

[Started recorder at 5:44 while Lainie Rappaport speaking]

Alison Curran is newest member of Cemetery Commission and spoke in opposition to merging Cemetery Commission into Parks.

James Lockridge spoke to governance of BCA and role of PACC

Closed at 5:50 pm.

### **2. Committee Reports: Priorities**

Councilor Mason asked whether tonight is just hearing reports or weighing in on them. President Knodell responded that whole council is reviewing committee work plans and giving input.

Charter Change Committee: Councilor Wright reviewed the issues in the report. Knodell asked for councilors to give input. Bushor thought committee agendas would go to council first

and then back to committee, rather than from Administration directly to committee. Wright said he thought committees were going to propose what they wanted to work on and then discuss them tonight. Knodell said it's consistent for the Administration to come to committee to ask them to talk about something. Bushor disagrees. Mason has concern about weighing in on bag tax or CEDO commission tonight. Knodell agreed council doesn't need to talk about these tonight. Shannon noted that committee identified noncontroversial matters that didn't seem to require full discussion by council and other issues required council discussion. Paul has no issue with items 1-4. Colburn supports item 4. Ayers is comfortable with items 1-4. He suggested folding arts and culture into the Parks Commission. The committee's list of topics was endorsed.

Community Development and Neighborhood Revitalization Committee: Councilor Colburn spoke to the level of activity of the committee and its involvement of citizens. She then reviewed the issues in the report. Bushor asked about UVM MOU and Agreement (Housing and budgetary). Knodell referenced her July memo in which she asked current members of HR Committee (Mason, Paul, Roof) to serve as ad hoc committee to advise the mayor on renegotiation. Shannon noted purpose was to reduce redundancy, and this list seems to meet that goal; there is no commission that addresses these issues. She also expressed that if there is a full report on something like reducing homelessness or NPA support, it should be discussed at the full council first. Colburn said they've been approached by the NPA's for a forum to discuss the NPA support issues. There was discussion on whether those issues should come first to the council or go to this committee. Colburn said the NPA's have requested more conversation with the committee about the issue. Paul has no problem with the committee's agenda. The committee's list of topics was endorsed.

Ordinance Committee: Councilor Mason reviewed the issues in the report. Wright with Hartnett's agreement would not have the smoking issue on the agenda. There are a lot of other things on the agenda, and there are bigger issues in our parks than smoking. Shannon noted that smoking ban in parks was referred to the committee by council—in fact, all of these issues have been, except maybe form based code. There was some discussion of the process for considering the form based code, zoning rewrite and whether it would go to the Ordinance Committee or directly to the council. Knodell said that a group will be organized to discuss this. Colburn asked to hear from PPNNE about how the new ordinance is working. Paul seconded Shannon's comment that no smoking was started in Parks Commission and referred by council, so should be considered by the committee. The mayor noted that as part of permit reform review, it is intended to look at some of the issues around historic buildings materials, so it would be helpful for the committee to wait to see what comes out of the permit reform work. Knodell asked whether this would come to council or to committee, and the mayor indicated this was yet to be decided. The committee's list of topics was endorsed.

Parks, Arts & Culture: Councilor Colburn reviewed the issues in the report. Wright said Hartnett is asking for monthly updates on the New Moran project to the committee. Knodell asked whether the library issues were redundant with the Library Commission. Colburn said they don't know yet, but the committee would not continue to address them if they were. Shannon asked why the committee would take a role with the library when they hadn't been

asked to do so, as that seemed redundant. Colburn responded that the library is currently staffing the committee and that there have been multiple financial issues and collaborative issues with Parks, but if people feel the committee should wait for a specific request, she is ok with that. Shannon said she'd rather wait for a specific request. Paul said the committee was initially just Parks, but over the last several years, they have expanded to Arts and now culture, which involves the library. The Library Director has said she is looking for council-level feedback. So, if she wants it, Paul believes the committee should respond. Paul and Colburn emphasized that most of the energy of the committee is going into the Waterfront projects. Shannon feels strongly that if there is council-level feedback wanted, the issue should come to council. Shannon and Bushor both believe the strategic plan should come to the full council. Wright agreed. Knodell, however, said she would be thinking why a committee isn't reviewing that. Knodell suggested that the council come back to this. She asked the mayor to encourage department heads to approach the committee chair if they feel they're going to both commission and committee on the same things. Paul said the idea of committees is to get some flavor from the 3 councilors on a committee before coming to the council. She feels the chair has been good about not requiring department heads to come and waste time. The mayor noted that Rubi did not express great concern. Bushor feels strongly the full council needs to be aware of strategic plans.

Public Safety Committee: Councilors Giannoni and Knodell noted that this committee has been previously discussed. As to the specific report, Uber was removed from the report and mental health and substance abuse was added. She said she hopes to have the thoughts from the last two public fora published soon.

3. Discussion: Cemetery Commission. Shannon moved, Colburn seconded motion to accept communications 3.01 to 3.03.

Shannon explained that when this resolution was introduced, she thought the Cemetery Commission had been consulted, but they were not. She offered to go to Cemetery Commission to discuss. The commissioners have a special interest in the cemetery. Right now, there are subcommittees on commissions for specialized topics. The key is that the Parks Commission gives citizen oversight of the entire department. This allows the commission to have a broad view of all the resources in the department, and also allows those with a special interest in the cemetery to meet those goals. Shannon said she doesn't want to make a decision until it can be discussed with the Cemetery Commission. There's no big rush. Knodell noted this was pushed to the 10/13 meeting. Bushor noted that this has been considered over the years, and she has opposed it but was open to this change this time. Now she is again opposed—4 meetings a year is not a lot—and isn't interested in pursuing any more. Wright agreed with Bushor. Shannon said the chair was amenable to discussing whether an expanded Parks Commission with additional seats and subcommittee would meet the cemetery needs. Ayres asked about whether it's accurate title 18 governs. Shannon said if so, it can be changed by charter. Mayor said the Administration doesn't have a strong position on this, but discussion with the cemetery commission would be good. Knodell agreed. Colburn agreed. Knodell said this will come back

to the council's 10/13 meeting. Shannon will vet ideas with the cemetery commission at its 9/17 meeting.

Wright moved, Roof seconded, to adjourn. President Knodell adjourned the meeting at 6:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Blackwood, City Attorney